

MR. *PARISH'S*

SERMON,

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORDINATION.



THE
EXCELLENCE OF THE GOSPEL VISIBLE
IN THE WRETCHEDNESS OF PAGANISM.

A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED DECEMBER 20, 1797,

BEING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS

ORDINATION.

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TO the Congregation in *BRFIELD*, with the best
wishes and services of the Preacher, this Discourse is cor-
dially dedicated.

IT was hastily written without a thought of publication.
The request of Friends is the only apology for its being made
public. It would require several sermons to do justice to
the subject.

If this imperfect miniature excite any curiosity for further
enquiry ; if any be more forcibly impressed with the value of
christian privileges ; if any good be done ; the author has
a rich reward.



LUKE, IV. xviii.

To heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

TO understand the nature of the objects around us, justly to estimate their value is a high attainment of knowledge.

HAVING informed our minds and obtained right opinions, then to direct our desires, our pursuits, and our zeal, according to the nature of their object, is the summit of human goodness.

THE husbandman, therefore, may highly value his farm, the mechanic his shop, the mariner his compass, the man of science his books; because these things are necessary to their mode of living.

THE man of moral reflection, enquiring whence his origin, what his destination, what his present duty, what his future prospects, finds the gospel essential to his peace here, to his happiness hereafter. To him the gospel is precious. He is "blind." He explores the resources of his own mind; he learns the philosophy of the wise; he finds light, only, in the volume of revelation. His conduct is wrong; his passions lead him 'captive.' To restrain himself he thinks of his interest, of his reputation; he finds commanding motives of goodness, only in the book of God. Here he reads the sinner's end; he trembles; he obeys. To bind our lusts, reputation and interest are no better than Sampson's bursting cords.

IMPERFECT man feels remorse, his spirit is 'broken;' he concludes himself under condemnation; the revelation of christians furnishes a balm to 'heal'

his

his bleeding heart. With terrors he is enslaved; the gospel gives 'liberty' and joy. The text ascribes to the gospel all these excellencies. The gospel *heals the broken hearted*, consoles the anguish of a guilty conscience; it gives freedom to the slaves of sin: It gives *sight to the blind*, knowledge to those ignorant of moral truth.

TO ILLUSTRATE THE VALUE OR EXCELLENCE OF THE GOSPEL IS OUR PRESENT OBJECT.

I. THE christian revelation is excellent; it teaches men what to BELIEVE respecting God, themselves and a future state; It directs the FAITH of mankind. This is a circumstance of the greatest importance; for the faith of men will ever, more or less, influence their conduct.

TRUTHS, the most interesting to the heart of man are no where discovered but in the oracles of God.

THE religious opinions of those destitute of revelation are, in general, so many gross absurdities.— That we may see the value of *our* privileges, let us for a moment recollect the articles of faith among the most enlightened nations of the heathen world.

PRIESTS and Philosophers taught, and the people believed, there was a plurality of gods.

THE Romans had three hundred Jupiters. Under so many names they worshiped this deity.

THE Greeks reckoned thirty thousand gods, there were finally in the heathen catalogue two hundred and eighty thousand gods.

CATTLE, Cats, and Crocodiles, were among the divinities of Egypt.

PHILOSOPHERS taught that creation from nothing was impossible; that matter was eternal; that there was no such thing as a first bird, nor a first man; that the gods had not power to make a good man unhappy; that pain was no evil; that a wise man was happy in the midst of tortures; that the gods were in shape like men, but of a larger size.

THESE

THESE are a few articles of a philosophic creed. PEOPLE and Philosophers believed the responses of oracles, the pretensions of fortune-tellers, the efficacy of divination, the power of witchcraft, the piety of observing dreams, signs and omens, fortunate and unfortunate days. Some of these heathenisms, remain in christian countries.— These christians are like those ' Children, who spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak the Jews language' in purity.

AT Athens it was believed that deformed children might be murdered or exposed to perish alone. Hipasus and Heraclitus taught that god was fire; Parmenides, that he was composed of earth and fire.

ZENO maintained that all crimes were equal; that injuries are never to be forgiven. Cleanthes instructed sons and daughters to roast and eat the flesh of their parents.

EPICURUS denied the providence of God: He allowed men to co-habit with their daughters and mothers. That parents might sacrifice and eat their own children was a doctrine of the Cynic philosophers. Ideas of immortality the heathen have; but how low, how sensual!

THE paradise of the Alcoran forbids description. In the other world the savage expects the pleasures of the chase, and the indulgence of ease. It is common in heathen countries to bury with the dead, or deposit near their graves the first articles of enjoyment.

In the Caroline Isles they place near the graves of their friends, fruits and other eatables.

THE Savage of America buries with the deceased what he possessed, the most valuable.

In India, with their kings, they bury a number of animals, and such vessels of silver and gold, as they think will be most useful in a future life.

IN the states of Barbary they carry vessels of water and provisions to the graves of their friends. This office is repeated every friday, as long as friends or relatives survive, who retain kindness, to perform such an act of supposed friendship. They have no belief, no conception of joys superior to those experienced here.

How different, how much more excellent is the FAITH of christians in all these particulars!

THE christian revelation teaches us there is ONE GOD the creator and governor of the universe, that he possesses all divine perfections. The gospel teaches us what MAN is, a fallen creature, "being in honour he abode not." The gospel teaches us, there is a MEDIATOR; that there is salvation for the believing, through Jesus Christ; that there will be a general resurrection; that the righteous will be rewarded according to their works, the wicked punished.

A LIGHT shines; the curtain is drawn; we have a glance beyond the grave. We may learn where our spirits may be while our bodies are conveyed to "the narrow house of death;" where they may dwell while ages of ages in succession pass.

THE faith of the christian is the substance of things for which he hopes. But to those intimate with the doctrines of christianity we need not be particular.

HAD not the Lawgiver of Israel, nor the Prophet of Bethlehem instructed us, instead of the truths of revelation, we might have embraced the creed of pagans. Does not the gospel open blind eyes? Does it not direct the FAITH of mankind? Has it not invaluable excellence?

II. THE christian system is excellent, it mends the morals of mankind: It regulates their practice.

To determine what christianity has done towards the regulation of morals, we must again recur to the pagan world.

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It is necessary to examine heathen, and compare it with christian morality.

If we observe the morals of a Paul, a Stephen, and innumerable other saints; how great is the contrast between them, and a Nero, a Mahomet, and an Attila?

How divine the christian appears! If we compare with Pagans, those who have only a theoretic knowledge of the gospel; the advantage, in general, is vastly on the side of christianity.

WITH all their guilt the believers in revelation appear almost like Angels, when contrasted with the professors of any other religion.

THE Heathen did not think themselves obliged to be better than their Gods. Many of these they supposed immoral and cruel: their conduct was approved and imitated. Accordingly, in some part of Africa and Terraferma the chief servants of a prince, at his death, were murdered to serve him in the other world. The heathen temples have commonly been asylums for the worst criminals. In Algiers a Turk may with impunity murder three Moors, or five Arabs, if he flee to a mosque where a marabout hermit, or saint has been buried.

He may murder eleven Jews, and find security in any mosque. Where somewhat like this prevails in countries called christian, they have really returned to paganism.

THE author of christianity allows not one immorality. The African and Indian shores receive the ashes of the living widow in the same blaze, which consumes her deceased husband. They had shambles for selling human flesh to be eaten in Jago, Hispaniola and Brazil. The Tartars suck the blood of wounded, dying persons. The Indians of Canada feasted on the bodies of their captives. At the present time several nations of Africa expose those children they do not like, to be eaten of wild beasts.

On the banks of the Danube it was the custom to cast their new born infants into the river ; those who could swim were taken up and preserved ; the others slept in their watry grave. Others killed their parents at a certain age, and feasted on their flesh. The Mingrelians bury their own children alive. In most heathen countries, and lately in France, *since they have rejected christianity*, they at pleasure dissolve the marriage relation. Nothing is necessary for a divorce in that "TERRIBLE REPUBLIC" but a month's warning from the husband or wife. In the city of Paris alone, five hundred and sixty-two divorces took place in three months.

THE Persians married their daughters, their sisters and their mothers. The connection is for life, or any particular time. In Tartary the father marries his own daughter, or sells her to the Turks, or Persians. When people become infirm thro' great age, or some disease thought incurable, they are left to perish alone.

THE religion of Zoroaster allows incest. A remnant of his followers remain in Persia and India. The licentiousness of the Spartans in the conjugal relation, their customs at some of their festivals—I may not describe. In Peru it was customary to fat and eat their own children born of captives, whom as concubines they kept for that purpose. When they became too old for this, they were killed and eaten. Such is the morality of nations never taught by the Redeemer of Israel. The world by their wisdom do not know God ; but give themselves up to vile affections.

THE heathen Philosophers taught that bloody wars, merely for conquest, were just ; that revenge was no crime. Their precepts armed one man against another.

Not so does the philanthropist of Nazareth instruct his disciples. From his precepts we learn that
humility

humility is a virtue, that forgiveness is a duty, that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, that we should treat others as we desire to be treated.

It is one grand design of the gospel to unite man with man, and nation with nation ; to form the world into one family of perfect morals.

SUCH will be the effect when the influence of the gospel shall be complete. No impiety, no wars, no criminal designs, will pain the heart of goodness.

THE good Samaritan, bearing the wounded stranger to the Inn ; the poor widow giving away her whole living, exemplifies the excellence of the gospel.

WHEN religious truth is powerfully impressed on the minds of a family, a neighborhood, a church ; we see, we feel how happy are the effects of the christian religion. In the meekness, the endearing kindness, the unaffected goodness of some persons, we form an idea of the millenium, we form some imperfect idea of Heaven.

I should abuse Christianity ; I should wrong many beloved friends, to deny I had seen such a spirit.

MIGHTY is the gospel to attract man to man ; to harmonize their minds ; to unite them in disinterested love ; to regulate their moral conduct. Were it not for the benign precepts of christianity, is it not probable we should sacrifice our children, feast on our parents, be guilty of the grossest immoralities ?

THE humane, the benevolent, the divine precepts of Christ teach us better ; preserve us from these kinds of wickedness ; instruct us in a perfect morality ; require us to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction ; to do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

THE MORALS taught by the son of Joseph in the Synagogues of Israel, the deserts and mountains of Judea,

Judea, as far surpasses all other systems; as the sublimities of nature are superior to the works of art; as the creation of God excels the labor of man. Who then can describe the excellence of the gospel?

III. THE revelation of christians is precious; it teaches them in what manner to worship God.

By the powers of reason men have never discovered with what sacrifice to appear before God. Here revelation is our only guide. Of this we shall be convinced, if we recollect with what horrid rites the different Pagan nations have worshiped their Gods.

WHILE we are speaking in terms not the most respectful of the heathen faith & worship, it may be justly acknowledged that their Philosophers Seneca, Tully, Antoninus, Zeno, Socrates, and others, taught many very excellent truths. But from what authority? What convictions, what reformation did they produce in others or themselves? After all the fine things he has written, Cicero says, "Whether the soul be *immortal* or not, is a very great question."

SOCRATES practised divination, sacrificed to the Gods; and at his death ordered a cock to be offered to Æsculapius. Zeno, the father of stoicism, murders himself to escape the pain of a broken finger. Cato destroyed himself with circumstances too horrible for description.

THESE are the men, blessed Jesus, whom thy foes name as rivals to thee. Their errors, their vices, are more favorably regarded than thy spotless morals, thy benign doctrines, thy godlike benevolence. Thy glorious death, thy majesty on the cross, thy power of raising the dead, thy revelations from heaven, thy perfection of character, is brought down to a level with worms, who tremble before an idol, or madly wallow in their own blood.

FOR

For a moment we are to attend pagan worship. A full view is improper. No words are delicate enough to describe in a christian assembly all their modes of worship. Too indecent some are to be named.

STILL it is hoped some freedom of speech will be excused, as the subject is important, and not generally known.

AT Sparta boys were scourged on the altar of Diana till they expired.

IN the region of Indostan, it is common for the Farquirs, voluntarily to undergo tortures dreadful to relate. They have strong iron hooks thrust through the flesh of their bodies; then getting themselves drawn up into the air, they are whirled round in the most violent manner with machines made for the purpose.

IN Mexico as an atonement for their sins, or a preparation for a solemn festival, they mangled their flesh till the blood profusely flowed. At the fast of the Tlascalans, which lasted one hundred and sixty days, the chief priest with about two hundred persons ascended a high mountain: When they came down they had a great number of little knives and small rods given them. The first day they bored their tongues, through which they drew the rods, and notwithstanding, their excessive pain, and loss of blood, they were obliged to sing aloud hymns to their gods. This operation was repeated every twenty days. At the end of eighty days, a general fast of the people began which continued an equal time.

IN some places they performed their worship by cutting off pieces of their own flesh and casting them at the idol.

How terrible is paganism compared with the mild spirit of Jesus!

The

THE remaining part of the description is still more dreadful.

WE have the testimony of the best witnesses; we have the most certain evidence, that lewdness constituted a part of heathen worship.

WE have one instance recorded by Moses in the story of Zimri and Cozbi. They were slain not for a *secret* crime, but a public offering to Baal Peor.

THE Greeks worshiped some of their gods with the same abomination.

WHEN Antiochus Epiphanes converted the Temple at Jerusalem into a temple for Jupiter, "It was filled with riot and revelling by the gentiles, who dallied with harlots—within the circuit of the holy places." 2d Macc. 6. 4.

JUVENAL says, "In what Temple are not women defiled?" Among the eastern nations after the mourning with which their festivals began, the rest of the time was spent in mirth and jollity, in debauchery, adultery, and incest. These were their religious assemblies. A considerable revenue is now collected for the temples of Indostan from the prostitution, there encouraged. Referring to this custom, as ancient as the old Testament, God says, "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot into the house of the Lord thy God." Deut. 23. 18.

AT Babylon every woman was obliged once in her life to visit the temple dedicated to lust. Surely these were services performed for Devils.

I HASTEN to finish this awful picture by informing you, that in all quarters of the globe, false gods have been worshiped by human sacrifices. The Queen of Xerxes caused 14 boys of the noblest families in Persia to be buried alive, a sacrifice to the infernal gods. The Scythians sacrificed to Mars one out of every hundred of the captives, they took in war. In the Island of Ceylon, and the whole
region

region of the Indias human sacrifices were common. The altars of Moloch, in the land of Canaan were stained with human blood. In Gaul they inclosed a man in a kind of wicker work, and burnt him in honor of the Gods.

THE banks of the Nile drank the blood of human victims.

UPON extraordinary occasions, the Romans offered their children on their country's altars. Marius sacrificed his own daughter. The same practice prevailed in Greece. Themistocles sacrificed three women to Bacchus. A daughter was offered on the altar by a king of Athens.

THE Carthagenians, not only immolated their own children in hundreds, but themselves also in times of calamity.

ON the islands lately discovered in the south sea, their sacred places are cumbered with skulls of men offered to evil spirits.

IN Peru they tied a living man to a stake, pulled his flesh from his bones in small pieces; broiled and eat it before his eyes.

IN Terraferma the natives Honoured their divinities with offerings of human blood.

IN Mexico they annually sacrificed twenty thousand men.

THE aborigines of Canada, of Virginia, and of New-England, sometimes, offered men to their malignant deities.

POSSIBLY, therefore, the spot on which we are has been an altar—perhaps here stood the bloody sacrificer—here lay the agonizing victim—here the dust was crimsoned with human gore—these fields around echoed the last cries of men offered to devils. More certain it is, our ancestors were such men. The inhabitants of Britain were so remarkable for this abomination, that even the Romans forbid them the exercise of their religion.

IN the time of Julius Cæsar the Britons constructed hollow images; these they filled with human beings whom they burnt alive.†

THESE are the people from whom we are descended. And why are not we, their children, this evening employed in sacrificing a kind friend, a faithful parent, or a weeping babe?

WHAT has made us to differ? What has taught us to worship Jehovah in a more wise manner? Is it not revelation alone which has opened our blind eyes, taught us rational piety, brought us into communion with God?

It is the christian revelation, which instructs us to worship ONE GOD, "to worship him in spirit and truth, to call upon him out of a pure heart, to lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting:" Christianity instructs us to address God in the name of the mediator; to pray in secret, in public; to intercede for all mankind. So rational, so benevolent is the worship of christians. All round the globe cruelties, self-murder, lewdness, human sacrifices, have constituted their religious services, but where the gospel is known there is a worship, adapted to the nature of man, the purity and goodness of God.

IV. THE christian doctrines are valuable; they unite men to God. The christian loves God. He contemplates God as his guardian, his friend, his father. The religion of pagans did not attach them to

† If any wish to be more acquainted with these subjects, besides the authorities incidentally mentioned in the course of the sermon, they are referred to Pastoral letters of the Bishop of London, printed A. D. 1730—to Dr. Robertson's history of south America—to discourses of Dr. Priestly relating to the evidences of revealed religion, delivered at Philadelphia 1796—to Mr. Locke's essays concerning human understanding—to Posthumus observations on theological subjects, by President Edwards—to Fols's and Saunders' Journal—to Hannah Adams' view of religion—to Morfe's Geography—to Guthrie's grammar—to Burke's letters to a member of Parliament—to the Encyclopedia—to Cook's voyages—to Leechman's sermons—to Brown's sermons—to Plutarch's lives—to Prideaux's, connexions of the history of the old and new testament—to Snuckhouse's History of the Bible—to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical history—to the Dictionary of the Bible.

After naming the Authors consulted on the subjects of the sermon, I have supposed it unnecessary to mark every phrase or sentence in which these words are cited.

to their divinities. Their affection to the objects of their worship, we may see in Suetonius, one of their own historians.

He says, "they were so angry with their Gods at the death of Germanicus, that they battered their temples with stones, overthrew their altars and flung their household divinities into the streets." These were the enlightened Romans.

DU HALDE assures us "That the Chinese, after offering largely to their Gods, and being disappointed of their assistance, sometimes sue them, and obtain decrees against them from the Mandarines." Do such facts need any comment? It is the christian alone, who loves God. The perfections, the honor, the family of God, are all dear to the christian.

THE christian loves the cause of God, more than his own interest. The christian lives to do good, to promote his makers cause. Joyful are those days, devoted to his God, nor is life dear when the happiness of others, the glory of God, demands the sacrifice. So benevolent, so self denying is the christian temper. Then, is not the gospel precious?

V. THE excellence of the gospel is visible in its preparing Believers for death.

WHAT are the supports of the Pagan in that serious hour, which awaits the sons of men? What was the hope of the renowned Brutus, when he pronounced Virtue an empty name, and sheathed his sword in his own vitals?

WHAT are all the heathen rites; what, all the philosophy of the wise; what, all the energetic reasonings of our own minds, as we approach the awful darkness of another world?

THE gospel alone brings consolation in that dreary, dreadful moment. The sanctifying influence of revelation prepares the christian to die in peace with himself, his connections and his God. A divine hope animates his departing spirit. He depends on the

Mediator, who has made propitiation for his sins and the sins of the whole world. Jesus has made an atonement. He has died, the just for the unjust. He is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins. The penitent sinner is pardoned, his name is written in the volume of life. An intercessor is at the father's right hand. See the holy christian in his last moments. Would he exchange his bed of death, for the thrones of unbelievers?

He is pale, helpless, dying. His physician has retired. No hope of life remains; his friends weep; their hearts are wrung with grief. He sees their tears, he hears their sighs, their despair is visible. Sympathising in their distress; inspired with humble triumph; he says: "weep not for me"—"See how a christian can die." His voice fails. The parent who would die in his stead, cannot procure him an hours reprieve. The brother, whose soul is tenderness, endures not the scene; his agonizing cries to God cannot be heard. The wife, frantic with anguish, is bidding adieu to hope, and every earthly bliss; she leans over the cold pillow.—The departing saint casts a fixed gaze on the friend of his heart: he looks with undescribable tenderness. Still he enjoys divine peace, his countenance is serene. Faith bears him above the terrors of death, by faith he sees beyond the borders of life; the grave clouds not his prospect. Visions of approaching bliss cheer his spirit. He sees a divine inheritance, a heaven of joy, a throne of glory, a golden crown, a spotless robe, adoring saints, waiting angels, a smiling God.

Absorbed in these ravishing views, he whispers: "Tell me, my soul, can this be death?—where is thy sting? When shall I die; when shall I live forever!" Often in such a frame the christian leaves the world.

Where can the pagan find such consolations in his last hour, where discover such enrapturing views?

Will not all bless God for the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ?

HAVING

HAVING endeavoured to shew the value of the christian revelation; we proceed to make some general reflections, which the subject may present.

1. Does not the divine excellence of the christian system call Minister and people, cordially, to unite in promoting its success?

UPON our cordial union, upon our affording comfort and encouragement to one another the success of the gospel very much depends.

FROM divine ordinances very little can be hoped where there is strife or alienation.

SHALL the golden talent be lost, because we have not mutual kindness?

THE blood of souls will then crimson our garments. If we exercise not a friendly, mutual regard, we refuse to imbibe a christian temper; the benevolent tendency of revelation increases our guilt. For those, who receive such valued blessings from each other; for those united for such glorious purposes, not to be cordially attached is ungrateful, is unnatural.

I PRAY God, we may hope better things of ourselves.

ON his part your Pastor has no complaint; but many favors to acknowledge. He has, ever experienced much of your affectionate regard, your sympathy, your candor, your kindness. May HE, who records the smallest act of goodness, and the most secret wish of love, repay you ten thousand fold, and give you a disciples reward.

2. FROM the excellence of the gospel, we infer, those have a bad taste and erroneous judgment, who prefer worldly pleasures to religious privileges.

THE precepts of Jesus form your associates for the sons and daughters of glory; they make the world, the universe thy own: "all things are yours."—Those, who choose earthly things, prefer atoms to worlds

worlds ; had rather grope in darkness, than shine as stars, and walk with saints in light. [They desire not to join in the songs of the redeemed, nor listen to the harps of angels ; but to grovel with "serpents and vipers." Have such persons a sound judgment? Have they a taste for the sublime or beautiful in what objects ever struck the heart of man or angels more grand or noble, than those presented in the administration of the gospel?

LET the children of earth prefer the world ; submit to no self-denial for the gospel ; live as you wish ; press to thy heart the fascinating objects of sense ! But will they cheer your mind in the agonies of death ?

WILL they calm your horrors in the tremendous scenes of the great day ?

Is it be more necessary, than earthly bliss, for doubting, trembling man to emerge from clouds of moral darkness to enjoy the light of truth ; to approach near and nearer still to the temper of spirits glorified ; to learn so to worship God, that he may say : "Command ye me ;" if it be more necessary than sinful pleasure to a candidate for glory, to attain immortal union with him whose smile is heaven ; with triumphant hope to enter the dreary vale of death ; then compared with the gospel, what are all the objects, that enchant the sinners heart ?

THE privileges of a christian are the only means of effecting these glorious purposes.

REVELATION is absolutely NECESSARY to the religious improvement of mankind.

WITHOUT revelation a rational piety would not be practised in the world. There is no good evidence that in any quarter of the globe a single kingdom, state, province, city, or village, ignorant of revelation, has just notions of providence, or a becoming worship of the true God, or well founded comforts in death.

SEVERAL

SEVERAL thousand years they have had to make improvements in religion : they are wrapt in the black shades of paganism.

WHERE is one country or town to be excepted? I ask the Deist of universal science : where can I find one hamlet thus blest?—He is silent. No such spot has an existence. Must not the baptised Infidel blush for his brethren? Blush for himself? What shall we say then to the nominal believer, who prefers the world to religious privileges? Has he not a bad taste, a perverted judgement? Is he not mad-ness in his heart? 3. Is the gospel is so valuable; we ought to pray for its extension and success.

‘PRAY for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper, who love her.’ What request can be more important, more benevolent, more acceptable to God?

4. If the gospel is so precious, then is it a blessing to be a Minister of Christ.

INSTANTLY it may be objected, that “His life is retired—few are attached to his person,—many grudge him their services—he is dependent,—abused.”

ALL this may be true, yet who would not be a Minister of Jesus, the prince of peace? Is it no compensation for difficulties to administer the word of eternal life? Is it no privilege to teach those we love, as our own souls, what faith will save the soul, what is pure morality, what the true worship of God? Is it no privilege to be an Agent in preparing our friends for death, for heaven, for immortal glory? One, who had been in perils much, in deaths oft, could say: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me; for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

THIS was no enthusiast; but a man of science and genius. Great is the privilege; pleasant the work to administer comfort to the broken hearted; to solve

the doubts of the enquiring; to exhibit to all the knowledge of salvation.

5. FROM the excellence of the christian revelation, we see how very wicked are mankind. A GREAT part of those, who read and hear the gospel, neglect, despise, hate and oppose its doctrines and spirit. They had rather perish forever, than deny themselves to obey its laws. With such light, with such convictions, to abuse redeeming mercy; what amazing guilt! How much more aggravated are their sins than pagans? More dreadful will their eternity be. The man of tears, who complains: "They hated me without a cause." "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," will soon be their wrathful Judge.

6. If the gospel is so excellent, so superior to all other systems of morality and theology; is not this good evidence, that it came from God?

How came the wanderers of the Arabian desert to fabricate a system of religion more excellent than any other nation? Is it a common event, or is it a prodigy unparalleled in the history of man for a company of slaves, marching from their masters to frame wise systems of divinity? If the Israelites did not invent their theology, it was from the God of heaven. They could not borrow it from their tyrants, who were worshipping beasts and vegetables; nor from their neighbors, who from their own bosoms tore their weeping babes to feast the devouring flames.

Was it ever known that a carpenter's son, born in a manger, educated in a cottage, employed as a mechanic, with a few illiterate fishermen, ever invented a system of Truth, infinitely surpassing all previous, and subsequent productions of the human mind? These persons "bring immortality to light;" teach the unity of God; teach that God is LOVE; that repentance of sin and faith in Christ will save the soul.

THEY

THEY are the first to tell us, our bodies for ages
slumbering, shall rise, clothed with glory or made
vessels of wrath.

THEY present the awful grandeur of the last so-
lemn scene. The world shall blaze, the sun expire,
the Heavens vanish.

THE Greeks and Romans were charmed with the
eloquence of philosophy. In other regions was ven-
erated the austerity of the Druids. Who can num-
ber the followers of Confucius? Mahomet boasts of
visions and revelations; nations adopt his faith.
Capac shines like a beam of the sun.

BUT, as directions to future happiness, what are
all their doctrines collected, more than the jargon
of Babel, if compared with the gospel of Jesus Christ?
Is not the plan of redemption 'the wisdom of God?'
Is not every precept of christianity clothed with the
authority of Jehovah?

7. If the gospel is so excellent, then it is a rich
compensation for all the sacrifices we make for it.

THE ordinances of christianity cannot be enjoyed
without some sacrifices. Should your christian pri-
vileges cost all your possessions, cost your life, as
they did the martyrs; this would be less than their
value. If you enjoy the glad tidings of redemption
for less than your precious soul; they are profitable.

CHRISTIAN wisdom is better than rubies or gold,
better than fine gold, better than a revenue of choice
silver.

JUSTLY prize the consolations of religion, estimate
the joys of heaven; realize the torments of the dam-
ned; number the days of eternity; calculate the
worth of souls redeemed by Jesus Christ; then tell
us what is too great a sacrifice for the gospel of sal-
vation.

8. If the gospel is so valuable, how interesting is
that day or hour, which unites a Minister and Peo-
ple!

THE grand object of their union is to accomplish the glorious designs of the christian revelation. To enlighten, to reform, to sanctify, to save souls, is the great motive to continue the sacred relation. "Be thou faithful to this flock, and I will give thee a crown of life," is the voice of Heaven to the pastor.

To the people the voice is "forake not the assembling of yourselves—where two or three are met in my name, there am I—hear and your souls shall live."

THE unfaithful have nothing to hope.

"OH son of man, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand."

PEOPLE, careless, are solemnly warned. "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart to give glory unto my name, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea I have cursed them." The salvation of Minister and people is apparently, suspended on their mutual faithfulness. Deeply interesting, therefore, was the hour, which united us in this relation. With joy or woe the moment will be recollected in eternity. Let us be careful then to perform the duties, we reciprocally owe each other. For an endless duration this may fix our character and our happiness. Oh my people, may we be faithful; the reward is immortal glory.

9. If the christian system is so valuable, how unhappy are those, who do not receive its benefits!

ALAS for the poor pagans! Whose heart bleeds not for them? They are stumbling on the dark mountains of death; the light of redemption shines not on their habitations. And must I not say: Alas, for some of you assembled this evening? Are there not many, who enjoy not the saving effects of the gospel? And is it possible that hereafter any present should be on a level with pagans? Possible it is. More tolerable will it be for Sodom at the great day than for

for such. "It had been better for you not to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it to turn from the holy commandment."—The excellence of the gospel demands your immediate acceptance. Another year is ended; little is there interesting in our religious affairs.

WE have, for which God be praised, enjoyed entire peace. No discord, no unkindness, no difficulties, have occurred. But to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Who has believed to the saving of his soul? Has the gospel been affectionately urged? Has the heart of goodness been comforted? Has the wicked been warned from his way? Before a higher tribunal these enquiries must be answered. Now is our time to prepare for the issue.

THE year past only one person has united with this church.† Despise not the day of small things. The cloud, which filled the land of Israel with rain, was like a man's hand.

SEVEN children have received the christian name in the ordinance of baptism. The grave has twelve times opened its cold mansion. The hoary head and the infant have bowed to the king of terrors.

Two of the deceased were professors of religion. One had long been an officer in this church.

HAVE we reason to hope the Lord has not forsaken us? Is there a general disposition to converse on things serious, and to attend religious instruction?

Of those, who have long been in the school of Christ, may it be enquired whether by the gospel, you are edified, comforted, and strengthened? The hope of this is pleasing. The great shepherd of Israel has commanded to feed his sheep as well as his lambs to give strong meat to men as well as milk to babes. Be strong in God; your redemption draweth nigh.

† During the last 10 years 72 persons have joined this church. In this period 94 have died

ARE any alarmed and almost persuaded to become christians ? Thy time for consideration is short.

CARELESS do any remain ? I would persuade you to be reconciled to God. While in the midst of your pleasures death is near : Providence may say : " This year thou shalt die."

IN the grave is no knowledge, nor work, nor change.

THIS may prove the last opportunity of the kind, we may enjoy together. Happy is the Preacher that his best years have been cordially devoted to you ; may remaining moments not be lost. Beyond all conception important is it now to live in such a manner, that in our last hour, we may have a sure hope of uniting again where death, nor separation shall ever come. The pious shall unitedly enjoy God. Pleasing is the thought, animating the hope, ravishing the assurance of such joy. What are your public professions ; what, your secret vows ; what, your resolutions ; what, your real preparations ? Are you diligent to make your calling and election sure ? Is it your great concern to enjoy peace of conscience ?—Is the law of God the only rule of your conduct ?—By our mutual advantages are we daily improving ? Must we recur to years past to find benefits from the gospel, or are some gentle dews of grace, constantly, falling to restrain the wicked, to console the sorrowful, to encourage the feeble, to sanctify the penitent ? And have any felt a penitent heart under the ministry of your own choosing ? Do you still know the consolations of religion ? God be thanked ; God be praised. Oh, that all present were in this situation ! By men of observation it is asserted, a most tender, indissoluble friendship exists between the Minister, and those awakened and sanctified by his instructions. Hence Paul styles himself the father of his converts, and them, his children.

It is said, they partake each others joys share each others griefs ; have a mutual tenderness ; are animated with one spirit.

WERE I to use the freedom of speaking as I feel, I should adopt these sentiments as my own. Happy the Minister, who has many such children ; he may speak with the enemy in the gate, nor be afraid.

REMEMBER, my Friends, the solemn vows you have made to God ; remember the reputation of the church, the salvation of your own souls depends on the real sincerity of your religion. Finally : Ought we not all devoutly, to notice the good hand of our God in bringing us to another anniversary eve ; to bless God that he has not denied us the precious gospel of salvation ?

WE know not what another year may bring forth. A night of affliction, the hour of final separation may be near.

LET us strive to do good, to make each other happy, to meet our God in peace.

THE gospel is the only mean of salvation ; it is balm to the wounded ; it is freedom to the captive ; it is sight to the blind. Blessed are the people, who know the joyful sound.

A M E N.

ERRATA.—In some copies the following errors of the Press will be noticed. 10th page, 15 lines from the bottom, for *inform* read *informing*. 16th page, 7 lines from the bottom, for *adopted* read *adapted*. 18th page, 18 lines from the bottom, for *saints* read *saint*. 19th page, 4 lines from the bottom, for *your* read *you*. 20th page, 14 lines from the top, for *chum* read *calm*, and in several instances, for *priviledges* read *privileges*.

Lines, with some alteration, sung after the sermon.

1. **T** WAS night when angels sung on Bethle'm's
 "Glad tidings" published in seraphic strains;
 'Twas night the gospel came to our relief,
 Dispel'd our fears, and soothed our anxious grief;
 In grateful song let hallow'd joys resound;
 This happy eve we long sought blessings found.

2. May Jesus kind, whose every thought is love,
 In tender mercy send the heavenly dove,
 To show our hearts how safe are wisdom's ways,
 Unfold the terrors which from Sinai blaze,
 Display the folly of each wrong design,
 A power resistless give to truth divine.

3. With pleas'd attention we instruction hear,
 New blessings hope from each revolving year;
 Our bliss shall rise, if Jesus we believe,
 Our Pastor share each rapture we receive;
 Oh, may we croud the sacramental feast,
 And choose our Saviour for our king and priest.

4. Thrice happy night, which gave us gospel truth,
 It cheers the old, and saves the wandring youth;
 Great things the Lord has done—we praise his name,
 Our hearts be love, and our devotion flame;
 We praise the Lord; let every tongue be praise,
 This night demands the noblest song we raise,

† The ORDINATION was in the evening.

F I N I S.

